

ANNIVERSARY ADDRESS

DELIVERED BEFORE THE

HIBERNIAN SOCIETY

OF

COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA,

ON THE 17TH MARCH, 1854,

BY JOHN J. MAHER,

A MEMBER OF THE SOCIETY.

~~~~~  
PUBLISHED BY REQUEST.  
~~~~~

COLUMBIA, S. C.:

STEAM-POWER PRESS OF R. W. GIBBES & CO.

1854.

JSC
941.5
m277A

.X

HIBERNIAN SOCIETY.

(EXTRACT FROM THE MINUTES 17TH MARCH, 1854.)

ON motion of Dr. REYNOLDS, the following Resolutions were unanimously adopted :

1. *Resolved*, That the thanks of the Society are due, and the same are hereby tendered to Mr. MAHER for the chaste, instructive and patriotic oration delivered by him before our Society this day.

2. *Resolved*, That a committee of three be appointed to wait on Mr. MAHER to solicit a copy of his oration on the present occasion for publication.

The Chair appointed Dr. REYNOLDS, Maj. WALLACE and Mr. MCGUINNIS that committee.

L. T. LEVIN,
Secretary Hibernian Society.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2010 with funding from
Lyrasis Members and Sloan Foundation

A D D R E S S .

It is unquestionably true, that the only certain means of perpetuating the liberties of a people are a proper appreciation of their value, and an active vigilance against such causes as are likely to imperil them ; and no people are deserving of the blessings of freedom, unless they are capable of duly estimating them, and are ever on their guard against the dangers that threaten their integrity or existence. Government cannot exist, at the same time preserving its purity, and conforming to its original fundamental principles, by any law of chance. As individuals gain the means of subsistence, the rewards of fame, and, in the end, eternal happiness, by hard and unceasing toil, so it is with an aggregate of men united in society under any constitutional form of government. If they would preserve what is worthy of preservation, avoid what is absolutely necessary to be avoided, and, without eccentric and delusive courses, proceed steadily onward to the full attainment of the objects of their society, they must reject no means of keeping alive in the hearts of the people a due sense of the peculiar privileges they enjoy, and animating them with the laudable ambition of so ministering to the ends of their government, as to keep it free from the perils and obstacles that beset it, and have been the occasion of destruction to so many a proud and hopeful enterprise.

Hence the recurrence of the anniversary of Ireland's patron saint, apart from the intrinsic interest it possesses for the sons and friends of that afflicted country, is attended with considerations highly interesting and profitable to the citizens of America. In reviewing her romantic history ; in tracing the causes that have led to her present condition ; in noting the vicissitudes that have marked her course, and perceiving how it was that she lost her liberties and could never regain them, we may come to the knowledge of wise and salutary maxims for our own political guidance, inculcated by that " Philosophy which teaches by examples." And while we may be permitted to mourn with Erin over her many woes,

join with hers our honest indignation against the Power which has never tired with oppressing her, and exult with her over the monuments of her greatness, that rise firm and erect even amid her desolation,—we may on the other hand, thank the kind Providence that has cast our lot in such pleasant places, and made our country the home and the refuge of the oppressed of all nations. It is at once a beautiful illustration of the genius of our institutions, and highly creditable to our own hearts, that we can enter with the most unreserved feelings of sympathy into the cause of a people, who have for ages been groaning under the burden of oppression, and been writhing under the lash of persecution, and yet, though all efforts for their disenthralment have proved abortive, present, to this day, a stern and indignant protest against the usurpations of the ruling power.

The grievances which Ireland has endured for the last seven centuries, make the retrospect to her condition previous to that time a source of pride and consolation to her people. Her national glory lies in the history of her past; for such has been the cruel and inhuman policy of her oppressors, that, while other nations have basked in the full blaze of what is termed the enlightenment and progress of the age, she has sadly degenerated from the elevated and promising position she occupied ere the disastrous event of British connexion befell her. Americans can well imagine how inspiring to their souls would be the recollections of '76, should it be their misfortune to be called to the defence of their liberties against a formidable invader; and there have been occasions since those ever memorable times, when they have triumphantly vindicated the spirit that animated the bosoms of their fathers, and proved that it still lived, as potent to preserve, as it was to rescue from a tyrant's grasp the freedom and independence of their country. It is thus, that the sons of Erin, be they the sharers of her miseries at home, or be they the happy recipients of the immunities and privileges of more favored lands, are accustomed on this day, while communing together on her present distresses and her prospects of future deliverance, to revive the memories of bygone days, and, recounting the deeds and events of her ancient renown, gather renewed hope, invigorated energy and reanimated ardor in the cause, whose prosperous issue engages the dearest and loftiest aspirations of their hearts.

Grateful and enlivening are the associations connected with the name of him, whose memory is peculiarly revered on this occasion. He it was who came to bring to a benighted people the glad tidings of man's redemption. And while other nations—great in arms, in laws, in the

institutions of art and learning, and in extended sway—persecuted the ministers of the living God, and made them the martyrs of the belief they taught; Ireland, without a deed of blood, with scarce an act of harsh resistance, and with an alacrity and unanimity unparalleled, abandoned her ancient and revered objects of religious worship and embraced the truths of the crucified Saviour. Here is the glory, and the hope of Erin! A glory, which overshadows the proudest and grandest works of man's material greatness—more imperishable than the Pyramids of Egypt, and bright and enduring as the eternal truths with which it is linked. A hope, that has outlived the most trying ordeals through which a people have ever passed; that has cheered and solaced the country of my fathers in the dreary night of her transcendent woes, and pointed her to a coming day, when He of her early and her faithful love, perchance reverting to a trying crisis in His own walk of afflictions, might be pleased to permit the bitter draught to pass away, and, as of old from Heathen bondage, suffer her from the grinding heel of British domination to rise, bounding to life, to freedom, and to joy—redeemed, regenerated and disenthralled.

Shall I tell how she, who in later times has been made the victim of an avowed, systematized plan of moral and intellectual debasement, threw open her seminaries of learning and piety, and, “without money and without price,” labored for the regeneration of the darkened mind and the purification of the degenerate heart, when the nations of Europe were blighted and desolated by the devastating incursions of northern hordes, and men were fast relapsing into the ignorance and vice of their barbarian conquerors? Shall I relate the “glories of Brian the brave,” and enumerate the glowing deeds of valor that distinguished the warriors of Erin throughout two hundred years of unremitting warfare with their ferocious invaders? Shall I speak of the Parliament at Tara, and thus trace to distant ages, the foundations of Ireland's claims for that legislative independence, of which she has been despoiled, and for the restoration of which she now struggles? It would be a grateful task to dwell on these topics, but the limited space that custom has assigned to an address of this character, admonishes me to pass on. Yet many a proud, though beggared, child of Erin roves in imagination, this day, through the flowery field of the past; and his heart swells with grand emotions as he sees thus early and conspicuously exhibited those virtues of generosity, bravery and native independence, which have ever been, through evil and through good report, the time-honored and world-renowned traits of Irish character.

It is well known that Ireland lost her liberties through the strifes and dissensions of her own people. Unhappily, the flames of civil war were enkindled; the weaker party entreated the aid of the English monarch, and he availed himself of the pretext to carry out a plan long meditated. The exhaustion consequent upon her protracted conflict with the Danes, added to the weakness engendered by internecine divisions, left her an easy prey to the invading forces of Henry, who, on partial conquest and the submission of some of her recreant sons, thus laid the foundations of that dominion, from whose despotic rule she has never been able to free herself.

It was Ireland's misfortune, that, from the first, there was planted in her midst, an interest hostile to that of the nation at large. It originated and grew strong, in the impatience and insubordination, with which the brave and ardent spirit, that breathed in the bosoms of her children, brooked the captivation of their liberties and the annihilation of their country's independence. The candid and ingenuous mind will do them the justice to believe, that had mild and conciliating means of gaining their adherence to the new order of things been adopted, the result had been successful; suffice it to observe that such experiment was not essayed. The ear of England was deceived by artful and deceptive representations to the prejudice of the Irish people. They were calumniated as turbulent, disloyal, incapable of being held in subjection, unless by the strong arm of power—a slander that has ever since been industriously propagated by their enemies in the face of irrefragable proofs to the contrary, to which it will be my privilege to advert in another place. As early after the connexion, as the reign of the first Edward, the people prayed him, in the most submissive terms, that they might be admitted to a participation in the English laws. It appears that their petition was graciously received; owing doubtless, in part, to the efficacy of a liberal donation tendered in compensation for so rare a boon, but mainly to the sagacity, which discerned the true policy of such an administration as would convert the prodigal resources of soil and climate, the advantages of local position, and the energies of the people to the real and lasting benefit of the two countries. A favorable answer was returned, and directions given for the convening of such a representative assembly as would express the will of the nation, in order that mutual and satisfactory relations might be established on an enduring basis. The historian tells us, that the privileged few, who alone enjoyed the protection of the laws, and possessed all the political power in Ireland, used such insidious, but effective means, as that the meeting was never held, and

the wise and provident intentions of King Edward in regard to his Irish subjects entirely frustrated.* The truth cannot be disguised, that the long series of oppressions and miseries under which the children of Erin have writhed for ages, is to be attributed to the England that dwelt in their midst—the execrable oligarchy that sustained itself by a truckling subserviency to the British crown, and by the spoliation and plunder of the rights and possessions of a devoted people. It is not my intention to enter into the harrowing details of the wrongs and insults which have been heaped upon the people of Ireland; but only to exhibit such facts, as explain why it was that they, whose devotion to country, and generous, uncalculating valor are unimpeachable, failed to throw off their galling and degrading chains, and reclaim their ancient liberties. The same power that oppressed them, sought to enslave us; and, had our fathers submitted, or had they failed to meet the first encroachments with resistance, similar might have been our fate to that of unhappy Ireland. The recollection of our country's success, in spite of discouraging trials and difficulties, might incline our minds to distrust the patriotism and courageous spirit of a people, who have had so many provocations to incite them to resistance, and yet are the hewers of wood and the drawers of water, the down-trodden, degraded and impoverished victims of as vile a despotism as ever dared the retributive justice of an outraged Providence. It is not meet that the American mind should labor under the false impressions too apt to be created by the ingenious, though slanderous representations of the Irish people made by their enemies. It will be, therefore, an agreeable duty to offer a few reflections, which may serve to disburden it of its erroneous views, and set it right on a subject, very naturally attracting so much of its interest and sympathy.

If the lights of experience, as afforded by the history of nations, are to be relied on, it must be concluded that great measures of reform, and great struggles for redress of popular grievances generally attain their ends only through the instrumentality of peaceful and orderly means. War against a foreign power, and war against an usurping power in the body of society, are essentially different. In the one case it is justified by necessity, inasmuch as it is the only resort for the maintainance of national rights, or the redress of national grievances, when a pacific adjustment is impracticable. But it would be difficult to substantiate the position, that men can relieve themselves from the burdens of oppression, and establish permanent safeguards for their future security, by assailing

* Stewart's Ireland.

and pulling down their governments and institutions ; and attempting amid the ruins they have made, and the tempestuous whirl of passions, wild with blood and anarchy, to build up an establishment of a novel character which is to insure to themselves and to those who come after them, the blessings of liberty and good government. Constitutions are not the work of a day. They may it is true, be fabricated, and on parchment assume the forms of wisdom and good policy ; but unless the parchment is a transcript of the constitution written on the hearts of the people, unless its principles be rooted in their habits and affections, it is for them no constitution at all, and so far from being a protection, is a snare, which leads to disorder, disaffection to law, and, in the end, to all the evils and crimes of anarchy.

The American Revolution was more a work of restoration than of radical change. The Colonies had their own representative legislatures. Each was organized separately and independently of the others ; and their common connexion with England was limited to the executive department of their respective governments. Such unwarrantable interference was made on the part of the British government with their constitutional legislative rights, as amounted to tyranny, and, consequently, a forfeiture of the executive trusts of the tyrant. The declaration and acknowledgment of Independence transferred to the body of each society the powers formerly vested in the throne. The Colonies became independent States ; and constitutions—the elementary principles of which had, previously, a real and active existence—were put in writing by bodies already recognized, and called into being according to the forms of existing law. Only such changes and modifications were made as their new exigencies required. The foundations of their societies, which throughout the struggle for independence had remained undisturbed, continued as before. There was no building up from the bottom ; for no work of demolition had been done. Our fathers battled against a tyrant, who attempted to establish a false and pernicious principle of government ; they contended for privileges they had always possessed ; and not against their own local governments. They were not maddened by physical sufferings and privations to a wild and indiscriminate destruction of their most venerable and cherished institutions. Their local governments were vitally interested in the contest ; and represented the organized force of the country against the usurping power which aimed at their ruin. Hence our success in the unequal conflict. We had no pampered aristocracy to convert our political establishments into engines for the undermining or betrayal of our liberties. The historian tells us,

that nobility did not emigrate here, but the commons only.* Our governments were then, even as they are now, the governments of the people. We thus perceive, that our disseverance from the mother-country, was accomplished, not by revolution, in the sense which history commonly indicates, but by a contest, which ensued upon a firm and determined opposition to claims that threatened the existence of the constitution itself; a contest, which was defensive and conservative in its character, and waged for the vital existence, and not the overthrow of our governments, laws and institutions.

Had the people of Ireland been possessed of a government, which was identical with their interests, and, while dispensing equal justice, was sufficiently inspired with a sense of its own dignity and importance, to repel foreign interference; they, like the American Colonies, might have successfully resisted the forced dominion of England, or, at least, been spared the terrible sufferings and afflictions that misrule and oppression have entailed on themselves and their posterity. But, as has been already said, such was not their good fortune. The Irish parliament was for ages the most unrelenting foe of the Irish people; and its barbarous edicts stand unparalleled in the history of nations, for unmitigated atrocity and refined cruelty. It is no disservice to the claims of Ireland for her national parliament, as at present urged, to hold up, in true and lively colors, the enormities which characterized that body when it existed. Indeed, she never had, since the foot of the English invader polluted her soil, in the true sense of the terms, a national legislature. If she ever gains for herself a government to represent and protect the interests of all her people of every class and every sect, she will have obtained, what she has not for seven hundred years enjoyed. The rights of Ireland stand on the broad foundations of Justice and Humanity, and cannot be injuriously effected by exposing the abuses and prostitutions of the forms of the constitution; but, on the contrary, they are rather vindicated and fortified by the convincing evidence thus afforded, that, to such abuses and prostitutions, and not to the constitution itself, are to be attributed the historical facts and circumstances urged in disparagement of her claims.

It cannot be denied that the parliament of olden times, miscalled Irish, spared no means of fomenting and perpetuating those discords and strifes, which had led into captivity the liberties of Ireland, and which were so obviously calculated to impede their deliverance. The people

were denounced and stigmatized as a degraded caste. No law, no justice, no charity was meted out to them. Every expedient was adopted to irritate them to wild and phrensied acts of resistance. Their lives were placed below the immunities allotted to animals of the chase; to hold friendly intercourse with them, was treason; the mailed hand of the tyrant smote the harps of their wandering bards, and changed to wailing tones the spirit thrilling strains, that told of ancient heroes and their deeds of glory. It were indeed a wonder, had the avowed object of such galling enactments failed of success. What is Ireland's history throughout the long and dreary night of her servitude, but a series of impotent outbreaks—termed by her oppressors rebellions—devoted but unavailing struggles of men, aliened and outlawed in the land of their fathers, hunted and slaughtered like wild beasts in jungles, fighting for home, for bread, for violated honor, and, above all, for bleeding country? And when the steel-clad armies of England trampled down these wretched victims, who but worked out the atrocious schemes of their persecutors, and reduced to the state of nature, struck nature's rightful blow for self-existence, what was the result? Was England awakened to a sense of the miserable condition of the people of Ireland, and did she interpose to check the insupportable usurpations of the power in their midst? Did she disclaim the mighty wrongs that had been laid to her charge, and set about the noble work of meliorating, reforming, reconciling jarring factions, and engaging the affections of the people by the mild and beneficent influence of her sheltering laws? Let the records be searched for the answer by him, whose sensibilities can bear the terrible disclosures. I would spare this generous audience a recital of the odious and detestable acts, which brand with shame that can never be effaced the brazen front of the British lion and its fawning minions.

The inevitable consequences of the frequent commotions, that stain the chronicles of Ireland's degradations and misfortunes, were confiscations and proscriptions, involving indiscriminately the inheritances of the innocent and the guilty; so that, in course of time, the landed property of the nation, seized from the hands of the rightful owners, came to be vested in the enemies of the people; and hence have flowed many of the evils, which even now bear so heavily on the social and domestic interests of the country.

Time will not permit more than this very general allusion to the circumstances which opposed the accomplishment of Ireland's independence. When it is considered that a government existed on the soil,

whose maintainance and support depended on the ruin and destruction of all the rights and all the possessions of nine-tenths of the people; when it is remembered that their unfortunate tendency to internal broils and factions was in the hands of their enemies, a potent and unfailing resource against any substantial and permanent organization for the assertion and acknowledgment of their rights; and when, in addition to these, we perceive the baleful and enervating effects which must have ensued upon the refined system of persecution that was avowedly pursued for the purpose of brutalizing the people, of rendering them incapable of a resistance based on reason and reflection, we will at once see the different and controlling circumstances between their situation and that of our colonial progenitors: and, so far from imputing to the children of Erin, who love their country with a Vestal purity and a Spartan devotion, a want of such virtues as burned in the bosoms of our immortal fathers, we may, without a sacrifice of dignity or an abatement of the pride which our past history justifies, rejoice that our country was exempted from the operation of such causes as have riveted their chains, and so often defeated their rising hopes of redemption.

It would be unjust to estimate the character of a people so grievously oppressed, as have been those now under consideration, by the excesses they have committed under the influence of wild and irrepressible passions, roused and inflamed by exasperating wrongs. While our feelings may be shocked, and our sense of humanity lament the dark and appalling crimes, which have at times varied that patient and orderly conduct, for which the people of Ireland have been distinguished through all their sufferings and miseries, our impartial judgment must criminate others than these unfortunate instruments, who were irresistibly urged to the perpetration of deeds, from which their own souls recoiled. Let those who denounce and asperse these children of persecution, and charge them with a traditional proneness to licentious disorders, and insubordinate uprisings against the peace of society and the wholesome restraints of the law, peruse, with an honest heart, the pages of their history. Let them draw from the glaring facts there recorded a truthful picture of the indescribable cruelties and injuries that drove them to these acts of horror and destruction. Let them behold a people, who, in native qualities of head and heart, are not inferior to others of God's creatures. Theirs is an island on which Providence has showered its choicest gifts; with a generous soil, which repays with lavish returns the hand of industry, and a scenery, presenting in its varied and picturesque forms—its towering mountain heights, its verdant vales, and placid lakes, and

bounding streams—all that a vivid imagination could conceive, and a poetic fancy desire. But this people are slaves. Strangers have come among them, as vicegerents of a bloated despotism, just across their eastern waters, and have fettered their limbs with chains, which, with an infernal ingenuity, close their rivets the more indissolubly for every effort made to sunder them. This is an old country, and its people are not of yesterday. They have recollections of ancient glory, but the edict has hushed them to silence. They love, and cling, with a tenacity proportioned to the wrongs and insults that are cast upon them, to the endearing and soothing associations which cluster round the domestic hearth-stone; but the insatiable covetousness of the enemy has driven them from their homes, and made them outcasts and wanderers in their native land. None have ever been so void of charity, or so recklessly regardless of truth, as to deny to this people the virtue of hospitality,—that hospitality which shares with a foe, as with a friend in need, the last crust of bread; which welcomes, with the generous cheer of the Bedouin of the desert, the wayfaring stranger; and, unlike the Arabian, sends him on his journey safe and rejoicing, with an invocation of God's blessing on his head. Yet the bloody code avenges an act of mercy extended to one of these—doomed is the roof that shelters them, and forfeited the life of him, who bestows a morsel, or throws a garment over their chilled and wretched forms. Justice, while it launches its anathemas, and thunders its denunciations, mocks, with insulting taunts and scorns, their entreaties for the merciful interposition of its saving shield. Let the traducers of this sorely afflicted people complete the picture. Let them paint the agonizing torments they endured for conscience sake—for worshiping, in their own way, Him, the “Prince of Peace,” who never “broke a bruised reed.” Let them, if they can, contemplate these scenes, and, in the light of the sun, and before their fellow men, say that because men, thus driven to the verge of insanity; houseless, famishing, the sanctities of their domestic precincts invaded and desecrated; every tie that binds to life nigh broken; that because, thus transported beyond the restraints of patient endurance, they raised the arms that God had given them, and rushed to the rescue of themselves, their families and their country from such a grinding, maddening rule as this—let them dare to say, that thus have the Irish people proved themselves unfit to be entrusted with liberty! Who would not rejoice that these things had never been; that these appalling scenes of carnage and destruction might be but the creations of a distempered fancy? But since they are painful realities, shall we lose our judgment in the sensations of

horror very naturally excited in our souls? There can be no fear that Americans will do such injustice. For, although it does not become them to approve all the crimes that are committed in Liberty's name; and theirs are not institutions, which either in their origin or nature, partake of the character of those that spring up on the ruins of society, in some dread "Reign of Terror," and, after their brief day of existence, pass away amid the imprecations of those who reared them; yet, there breathes throughout this land a spirit that can feel for the sorrows, and contumelies, and sufferings of a wronged and insulted people, and justify the blow, however unavailing and however misdirected, that strikes for the Rights of Humanity, and the holy cause of Freedom!

I have said, that it would be unjust to form a judgment unfavorable to the character of the Irish people, from the excesses they have occasionally committed in seasons of popular tumult; and have endeavored to show that for these, their oppressors and not themselves are accountable. It has also appeared that the fatal success, which attended the constant and persevering efforts of the enemies of the people to keep them in a state of discord and division, effectually prevented such association among them on principles of order and moderation, as was alone calculated for the obtainment of their rights. Memorable occasions, however, are presented in history, when the people were reconciled in one body, and by the invincible force of their united position, and the calm, but unwavering determination with which they demanded their rights, evidenced both their orderly character and the efficacy of union and moderation in rescuing from confirmed despotism the rights and immunities of the subject. The organization of the Irish Volunteers in 1782, and of the United Irishmen a few years later, and, in 1823, the Association organized by the illustrious O'Connell, were all founded in principles of wisdom and sound conservative policy. The first so effectually roused the patriotic spirit of the nation, that even the Parliament, overpowered by the eloquence of Grattan, backed by the bristling bayonets of his trusty army, was constrained to yield to the voice of the people, and assert its own independence of the English government. England, just taught a bitter lesson in her contest with the citizen soldiers of America, did not elect to turn her jaded, spiritless armies against a band of patriot volunteers, fifty thousand strong, self-armed, self-paid, with the memory of a thousand wrongs, and with a reliance on the justice of their cause and the strength of their arms, which could not be defeated. Ireland gained her independence, so far as concerned her legislative rights; and while the spirit of patriotism, which had been diffused by the glorious

and bloodless struggle, lasted, there was some show of justice, and not a little national and commercial prosperity. But this Parliament, dear as was its independence to the people—for they cling even to the semblance of freedom—was, as of yore, no government for them. Soon did it exhibit its obsequious servility to the English Government by its onerous and restrictive legislation on commerce, and its persecuting and disabling laws against the religious belief of five-sixths of the people. From the north, whence had emanated the idea and the organization of the Volunteers, came now the watchwords “Emancipation and Reform,” and the south echoed back the joyful words “Reform and Emancipation.” This was indeed a happy day for old Erin, when her children so long estranged from each other, so long the dupes of their enemies, forgot all sectarian differences, all feuds and dissensions, and intertwined themselves in one fold under the glorious name of “United Irishmen.”

On a previous anniversary, this period of Ireland’s history was eloquently and graphically detailed. And even were I not compelled to hurry on, I should refrain from dwelling on topics which have received such thorough and masterly treatment. It is enough to say that bribery and corruption, duplicity and perfidy dissolved the association of United Irishmen and precipitated civil war ; and that, in the midst of the confusion, the Parliament closed its long career of sycophancy and wickedness, by annihilating its own existence, and, without the knowledge and consent of the people, transferring its powers to the wise and benevolent guardianship of Great Britain !

The history of that movement, to which forty years of the life of Daniel O’Connell were devoted, being of our own time, is familiar to all. It is sufficient for our purpose to observe, that whatever differences of opinion may exist as to the merits of his policy, we must admire the almost preternatural power a single man was enabled to exercise, as with a wand of magic, in calming and repressing the surging passions that raged in the bosoms of eight millions of men, burning to avenge the wrongs of ages. A word from his lips, like a blow from the spear of Æolus, might have let forth the imprisoned elements of destruction ; but his voice was never heard, save to allay the rising billows, and to avert the wreck of reason and, with it, the cause of his beloved Ireland. He gained Emancipation, though coupled with an act disfranchising the forty-shilling freeholders—on the same principle of compromise that has so fatally perverted the Constitution of the American Union. He might have gained his darling object, the repeal of the Union ; but in the meridian of his usefulness, just when the cause of his country was jeopar-

dized by—that bane—conflicting councils, and when, like our own Calhoun, he felt that were his life prolonged he might consummate the noble enterprise, to which all his talents and energies had been dedicated, he was stricken down by the fell destroyer, and, alas! there was none to take his place.

The loyalty of the Irish people, so severely tried, so eminently true to the government of Great Britain, affords the most conclusive refutation of the charge of turbulence and insubordination preferred against them. It might reasonably be supposed that their fidelity to their oppressor would be rather a forced necessity, than a spontaneous tribute. But that the fact is otherwise is established on every page of their history. England owes many a proud victory to her persecuted yet faithful subjects of the Emerald Isle. Her armies and navies, who have borne her standard triumphantly through many a hard-fought battle, and have covered her name with a glory equalled only by the shame that attaches to her heartless ingratitude, are filled with gallant Irishmen. Who were her Wellington and her Napier? They were sons of that little “isle of the ocean,” who bruised, insulted and traduced as she has been, was never known to hesitate, when called on for the contributions of her needy purse or the services of her warrior-children. Who will forget their unswerving adherence to the ill-fated House of the Stuarts, notwithstanding the base ingratitude, which throughout their reigns, returned for loyalty and devotion, injustice and tyranny? It is said that the last of these who filled the throne, when that cowardice and pusillanimity, which compelled him to flee his kingdom, on the occasion of a visit from his Dutch son-in-law, overpowered him a second time at the Battle of the Boyne, hastened to the Court of Versailles, and represented with such apparent sincerity the recreancy of his brave Irish soldiers and his consequent failure, that the French troops were recalled.* He may have raised, for a time, a prejudice against those whom he had ignominiously deserted, and whose honor he flagitiously vilified, but this could not be for long. Many of those valiant spirits, who could not bear to remain in their native land on terms with a perfidious enemy, availed themselves of a clause in the Treaty of Limerick, to emigrate to France, who gave them a welcome. To her they offered their services, and as long as the fields of Fontenoy and Cremona and a thousand others as glorious are remembered, will the names of the Irish Brigade and their immortal deeds of dauntless courage be engraved in the memory of the

* Stewart's Ireland. Taylors History.

beautiful country of their adoption. There have been occasions when England, exhausted by foreign wars, must have succumbed to the people of Ireland, armed and united for the recovery of their independence. As, for example, during her disastrous contests with America and France. But it is historically true, that the Irish volunteers originated in the confessed inability of England to afford Ireland protection against the French fleets which hovered round her coasts; and that, instead of taking advantage of her helpless condition to wrest from her grasp, at the point of the sword, the liberties of their country, these magnanimous soldiers repeatedly tendered their services in defence of the kingdom. True, they availed themselves of their inimitable organization to restore the freedom of their national legislature; but this they accomplished without the shedding of a drop of blood, or the breaking of a single law. It is to these immortal heroes, and not to O'Connell—as those who denounce him and his measures suppose,—that the great doctrine of “Moral Force and Peaceful Agitation” owes its inception. Their arms may have intimidated, but only because they were grasped by men whose minds, as well as hearts, were set calmly and fixedly on the cause of right and of freedom—men, who “knew their rights, and knowing dare maintain them”—men, who had no such distorted vision, as to recognize the angel-form of Liberty only in dishevelled locks and blood-stained garments; nor yet, whose slavish hearts would stoop to beg in cringing notes, or

“Crook the pregnant hinges of the knee,
Where thrift may follow fawning”—

Men with whom it were dangerous to trifle, but who preferred to rest their country's glory and independence on broad and solid foundations, rather than she should hold them on the evanescent and precarious tenure of armed force, and fortune's capricious favor.

Fellow citizens! That great and good man, whose pure and unshrinking devotion to the cause of his bleeding country scorned the allurements which had caused so many a faithless son of hers to teach her

“How sharper than a serpent's tooth it is
To have a thankless child.”

The immortal Grattan once said, that our country was “the only hope of Ireland, and the only refuge of the Liberties of mankind.” It behoves us to see, that the sacred legacies intrusted to our charge shall be transmitted to posterity as pure and as perfect as when we received them.

Have we no cause to feel anxious concerning the future? Can we close our eyes to events, daily and hourly transpiring around us, pregnant with danger to the institutions of American Freedom? Are there not elements at work, which threaten the peace and safety of society? Can the most sanguine of us calmly contemplate the dreadful consequences that would result from the practical ascendancy of such radical theories as are boldly advocated in the northern section of this Union? Theories striking at the very foundations of society, and utterly incompatible with the supremacy of order and government—springing in every variety of form from the restless brains of the idle, the vicious and the disaffected; and, in defiance of law, disseminated from the pulpit, the hustings, the press and—alas! that it shall be said—from the halls of legislation. What are the aims or what the tendencies of free-soilism, communism, socialism, universal-republicanism, and the myriad of other *isms* which are rife in the bosom of northern society? Do they not all proceed upon a false and vicious interpretation of the principles in which our American governments are founded? Do they not profane the name of the Almighty by making His voice and the voice of a mob of co-equal sanctity?—the voice of an insurrectionary crew of Dorrites, or Higher-Law Abolitionists, the voice of Jehovah! Are they not clamoring for liberty and equality—the liberty of defying law, and the equality of a state of nature? And what is their universal-republicanism? We saw, but a few days since, that at a meeting in New York of one of the societies organized under this name, after declaring for the abolition of all government and all religion, its President gave: “The abolition of royalty in Europe,” and in the same breath, “The abolition of slavery in America!”

Happily, we are exempted from these destructive and disorganizing forces, by reason perhaps of the existence among us of the very institution which they unite in assailing. But that we are safe from their baneful influence is by no means certain. The history of Ireland reads us a lesson on the fatal consequences of dissensions, over which it will be well for us to ponder, and the effect of which it will be well for us to keep.

When an exile of Erin comes to our shores, he brings with him a disposition to repay the protection so generously accorded him, with a loyal and faithful devotion. He comes here no stranger; for he knows that when the country of his adoption had her long and doubtful struggle for independence, his countrymen poured out their blood and treasure as freely as any for the liberties in which he now comes to participate. He

knows that the names of a Montgomery, a Jasper and a McDonnell are held in grateful remembrance, and will be handed down to the latest posterity, honored and venerated by a generous people. He comes not here to plot and to scheme for the overthrow of society—to sting like a viper the bosom that fosters him. When the term of probation has elapsed, he hastens to bind himself irrevocably to the country that has given him an honorable refuge. And when the bugle sounds to arms, he is ever found at the post where honor and duty calls, ready, if need be, to attest with his heart's best blood its deep devotion to the cause of his country.

The loyalty of the sons of Erin so thanklessly bestowed on the power that crushed them, finds in this land its natural and congenial element. Here they enjoy, in its plenitude, the regulated liberty for which they vainly sighed at home. Here they are shielded from corruption and injustice, and entitled, of right, to the protection of the law. The varied avocations of life are open to their choice, and the rewards of industry, perseverance and integrity are secured to the deserving. But, above all, here, the sacred rights of conscience are inviolably preserved! Every heart that breathes an ardent hope for the perpetuity of American freedom must throb in unison with the sentiments of a distinguished orator and divine, eloquently expressed on an occasion similar to the present—“May God long preserve the liberties of this country from any union of any Church with any State! In any country, with any religion, it is an unnatural increase of the powers of the executive against the liberties of the people.”*

Fellow-citizens, our country is indeed the only hope of Ireland. Since Grattan spoke, we have grown, as from a wilderness, to be a great and flourishing nation; but amid all the gigantic cares and anxieties that attend our rapid progress, we have ever had a friendly hand for the children of Erin, either to grasp with a warm and honest welcome the sorrowing exiles who come to the smiling land, where

“They say there's bread and work for all,
And the sun shines always there,”

or to bear across the ocean the rich contents of our bursting granaries, to sustain the starving millions who behold the fruits of their toil—enough, and more than enough to relieve their wants—deported from their shores to swell the pride and coffers of lordly and unfeeling absentees. Such

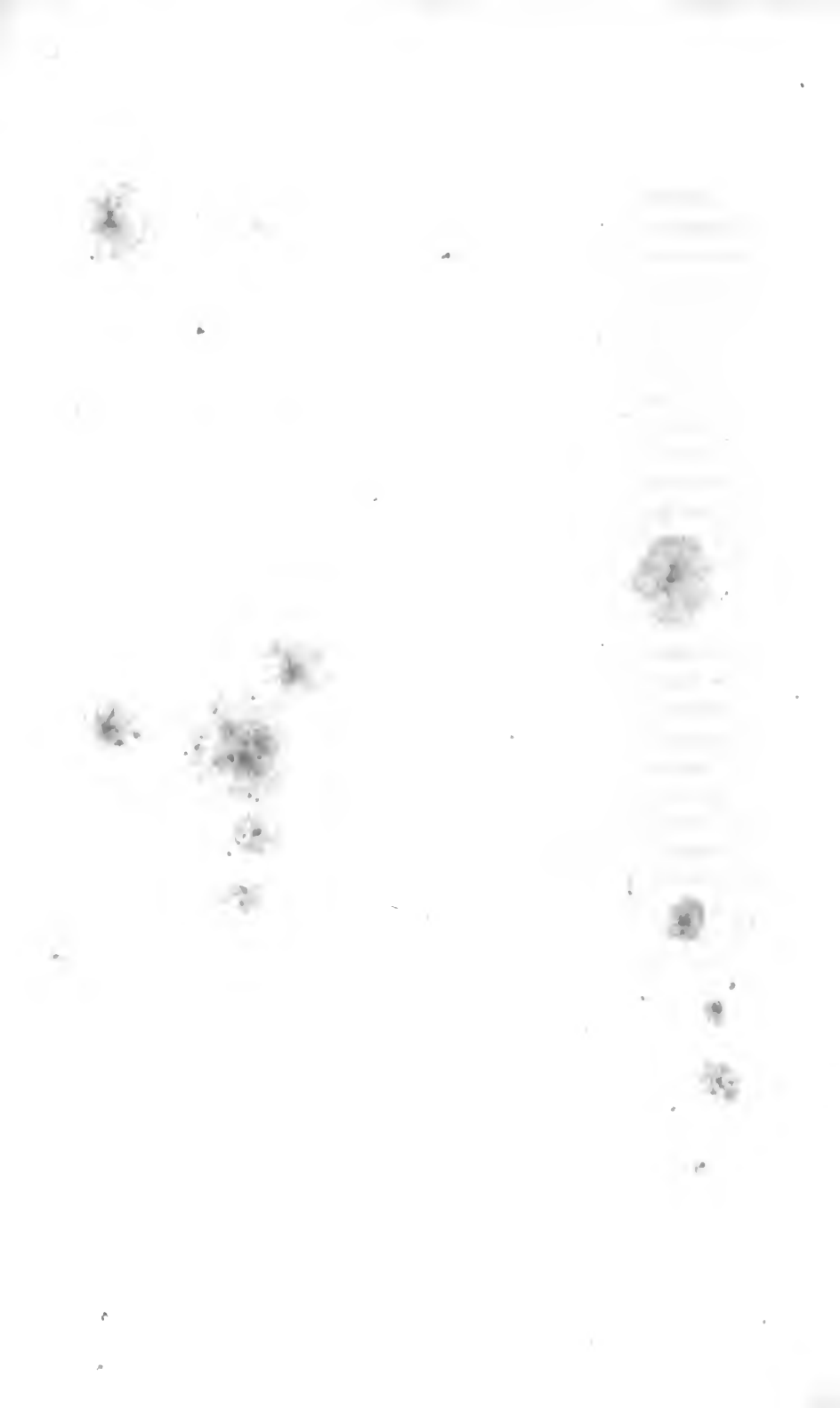
*Bishop England.

is our country ! How lovely does she appear in these soft and tender ministrations of pity and sympathy ! While sternly pursuing her grand and complicated aims, she is, like some mighty mountain, towering high above the clouds, from whose rugged sides flowers of bright and attractive hues shoot forth and smile in the sunlight of Heaven.

Yes, poor Erin ! your only hope is in the safety and duration of the liberties of America. Well may your prayers unceasingly ascend to the throne of Him who holds in His hands the destinies of nations, for the prosperity and fortune of the people who have so well befriended you in the hour of your distress ! Well may you raise your manacled arms and streaming eyes to Heaven, and, offering up the blood of your martyred saints and patriots, and your long and terrible agonies, implore in our behalf a continuance of the smiles under which we have thus long prospered ! Well may you tell over to us your tale of sorrows and afflictions, and point with bursting heart to the causes of your degradation ; for easier are your calamities to be borne, if they may serve as beacons to warn against the rocks that wrecked your hopes, and threaten the ruin of the fairest structure that ever mind conceived or heart admired.

But if we shall be faithless to our mighty and solemn responsibilities, and, regardless of the dictates of wisdom and the lessons of experience, suffer the great interests committed to our charge to be impaired or destroyed ; if we shall go on trusting to the chances of events ; or, if deluding ourselves with the hope that our institutions have inherent strength to withstand the multiform forces that are working for their destruction, we shall forbear to take timely and effective measures to secure them, it may be—which God in his mercy avert !—that “ the only hope of Ireland, and the only refuge of the liberties of mankind,” will go down amid the exulting shouts of tyrants and the groans of their heart-broken victims.

“ What song shall then in sadness tell,
Of broken pride, of prospects shaded,
Of buried hearts, remembered well,
Of ardour quenched, and honour faded ?
What muse shall mourn the deathless brave,
In sweetest dirge at memory’s shrine ?
What harp shall sigh o’er Freedom’s grave ?
Oh, Erin ! thine !”





11.